begun to strain the town's limited transportation facilities. Yet despite frequent calls for construction of a new, more modern depot, no action was taken until conditions grew markedly worse as a result of further railroad development in the Sandhills. In March 1911, a new company, the South Carolina Western Railway, began operating a forty-mile line running from McBee to Florence. According to one report, the event marked the beginning of "a new era" for Sandhills residents since the "[t]erritory that is opened by this new road has long been suffering for want of proper railroad facilities."[8] But for McBee, the immediate consequence was increased congestion on the streets of the town. Wagon traffic reached unprecedented levels as local couriers attempted to accommodate the volume of shipments requiring transfer between Seaboard's trains and those of the two other railroads serving the town. Not infrequently, traveling salesmen, tourists, and other passengers entered the fray as they rushed to make connections. For many townspeople, the entire spectacle raised troubling questions about the deleterious effects of "progress."

Indeed, it was not long before the state railroad commission stepped in and took decisive action to improve the town's transportation facilities. On October 23, 1913, the commission issued orders instructing Seaboard and the South Carolina Western Railway to decide upon a site for a new passenger depot within thirty days.[9] The management of each company complied and in short order, plans were underway to begin construction early the following spring.

Not surprisingly, when work on the new depot commenced on March 2, 1914, the undertaking captivated the attention of almost all residents of the community. The March 5 *Cheraw Chronicle*

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[8]*Cheraw Chronicle* (Cheraw, S.C.), 23 March 1911, p. 1, col. 2 (quotations); *The State*, 17 April 1912, p. 10, col. 3. The South Carolina and Western Railway was absorbed by the Seaboard system three years later. See Agreement of Merger or Consolidation, 3 April 1914, File 157, Corporation Charter Division, Office of the Secretary of State of South Carolina, SCDAH.

[9]*Cheraw Chronicle*, 23 October 1913, p. 8, col. 1.